

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1369

As Reported by House Committee On:
Local Government & Housing

Title: An act relating to county elected officials keeping offices at the county seat.

Brief Description: Addressing county elected officials keeping offices at the county seat.

Sponsors: Representatives Haler, Takko and Klippert.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Local Government & Housing: 2/2/09 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Authorizes certain county officials to keep their main offices at a location other than the county seat, provided they maintain an office at the county seat.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT & HOUSING

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Simpson, Chair; Nelson, Vice Chair; Angel, Ranking Minority Member; Ericksen, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cox, Miloscia, Short, Springer, Upthegrove, White and Williams.

Staff: Sara del Moral (786-7291); Thamas Osborn (786-7129)

Background:

The general legal framework by which Washington's 39 counties must operate is found within the state Constitution. The Constitution includes provisions for county organization, governance, and elected officials, including the establishment of county clerks, sheriffs, and treasurers.

With some exceptions, the specific powers and duties of elected county officials are prescribed in statute. For example, state law obligates superior court clerks, county sheriffs, county treasurers, and county road engineers to keep their offices at their county seats.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

At the discretion of the Board of County Commissioners, the superior court clerk, the sheriff, the county treasurer, and the county road engineer may keep main offices at a location other than the county seat, provided he or she maintains an office at the county seat.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill adds that a Board of County Commissioners may provide offices for county officers in locations other than the county seat at the board's discretion.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Benton County has located offices in the Tri-Cities to better serve the large population there. The law should change so the county can be in compliance. People should not have to drive long distances to get county services. This bill would allow counties to provide better and more efficient service to constituents.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Haler; and Leo Bowman, Benton County.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.